

FSIS NOTICE

23-01

6-29-01

REVISION TO THE NEW DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS FOR AVIAN KERATOACANTHOMA

Why is FSIS issuing this Notice?

FSIS is issuing this Notice to clarify that Veterinary Medical Officers (VMOs) are to ensure the implementation of the new disposition instructions regarding poultry with avian keratoacanthoma. This notice cancels FSIS Notice 17-01.

What is avian keratoacanthoma?

Avian keratoacanthoma, previously known as dermal squamous cell carcinoma, is a lesion found in the skin of young chickens that arises from the feather follicle epithelium. The lesions first appear to form as outgrowths of the epithelium and rapidly form intradermal nodules that are filled with keratin and cell debris. Avian keratoacanthoma is not considered a disease of public health significance and does not cause foodborne illness.

What are the new disposition instructions?

For young chickens showing localized signs of avian keratoacanthoma with a few small lesions, VMO's will ensure the removal of all affected tissues. For young chickens showing generalized signs of avian keratoacanthoma with large coalescing or large multiple dermal ulcers, VMO's will ensure that the carcass and viscera are condemned.

Why is FSIS changing the current disposition instructions?

A. The old instructions for the disposition of these chicken carcasses involved trimming the lesion if only a single lesion is present in the skin, then passing the carcass and viscera. If multiple lesions were identified in the skin, the carcass and viscera were condemned. These criteria were based on the suspicion that birds with multiple lesions were affected by a malignant tumor that was metastatic.

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B. Recent scientific evidence shows that these lesions in young chickens are not metastatic. Although squamous cell carcinomas do arise in older hens and these tumors may be metastatic, lesions in young chickens are not found outside the integumentary system. The lesions in young chickens arise multicentrically in feather follicle epithelium due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors.

/s/ Philip S. Derfler

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